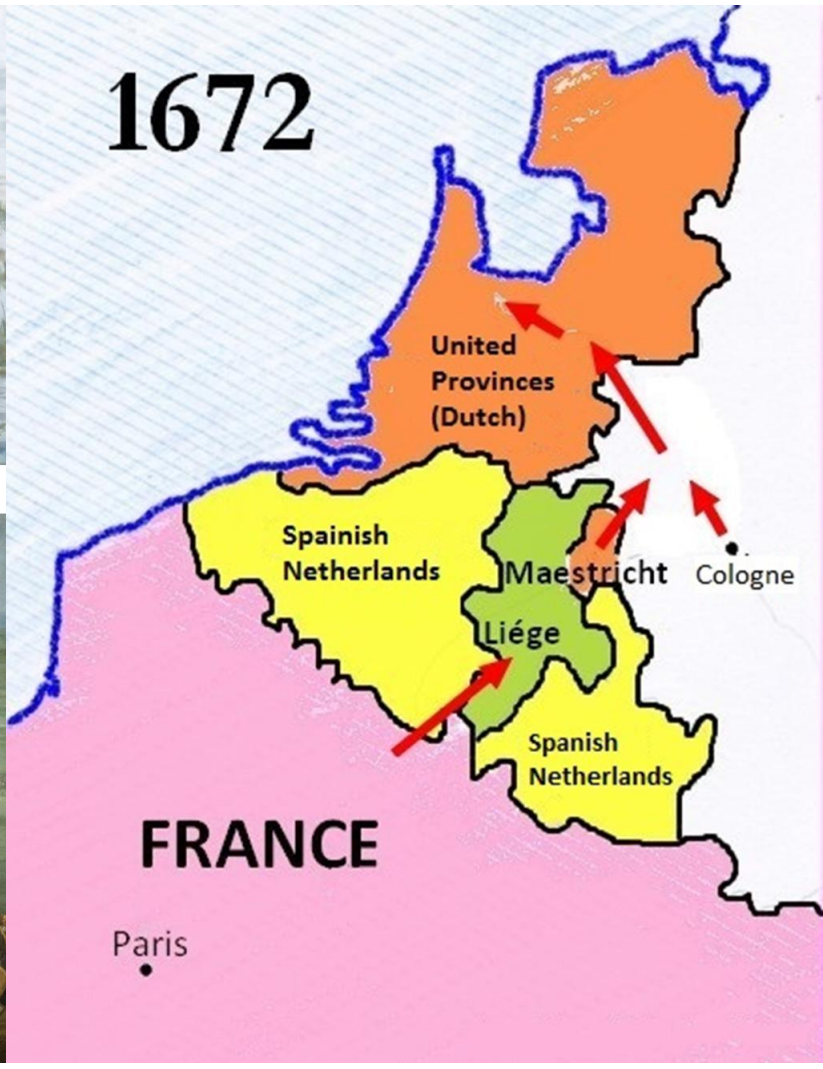
Franco-Dutch War

Casualties and losses

120,000 killed or wounded Franco
100,000 killed or wounded Dutch

William of Orange inspects the Dutch Water Line

Lambert de Hondt (II): Louis XIV is offered the city keys of Utrecht, as its magistrates formally surrender on 30 June 1672



The Franco-Dutch War, 1672 to 1678, was primarily fought by France and the Dutch Republic, with both sides backed at different times by a variety of allies. Related conflicts include the 1672 to 1674 Third Anglo-Dutch War and 1675 to 1679 Scanian War.

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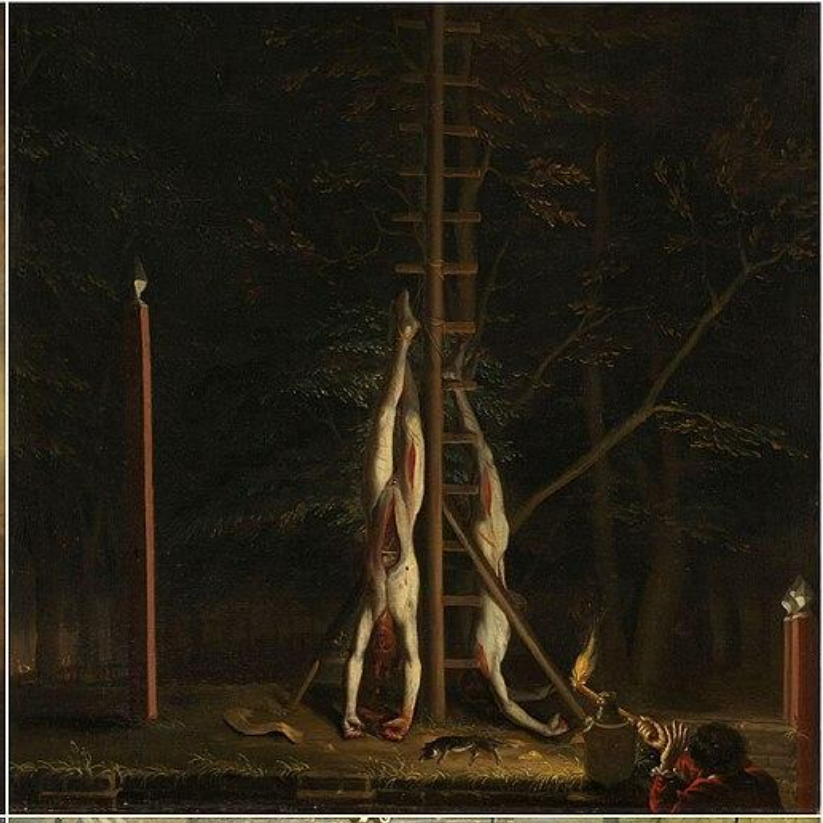

In May 1672, France nearly overran the Netherlands, an event remembered in Dutch history as the Rampjaar, or "Disaster Year". However, by late July the position had stabilised, while concern over French gains brought the Dutch support from Emperor Leopold I, Spain and Brandenburg-Prussia. Previously an ally of France, England exited the war in February 1674.

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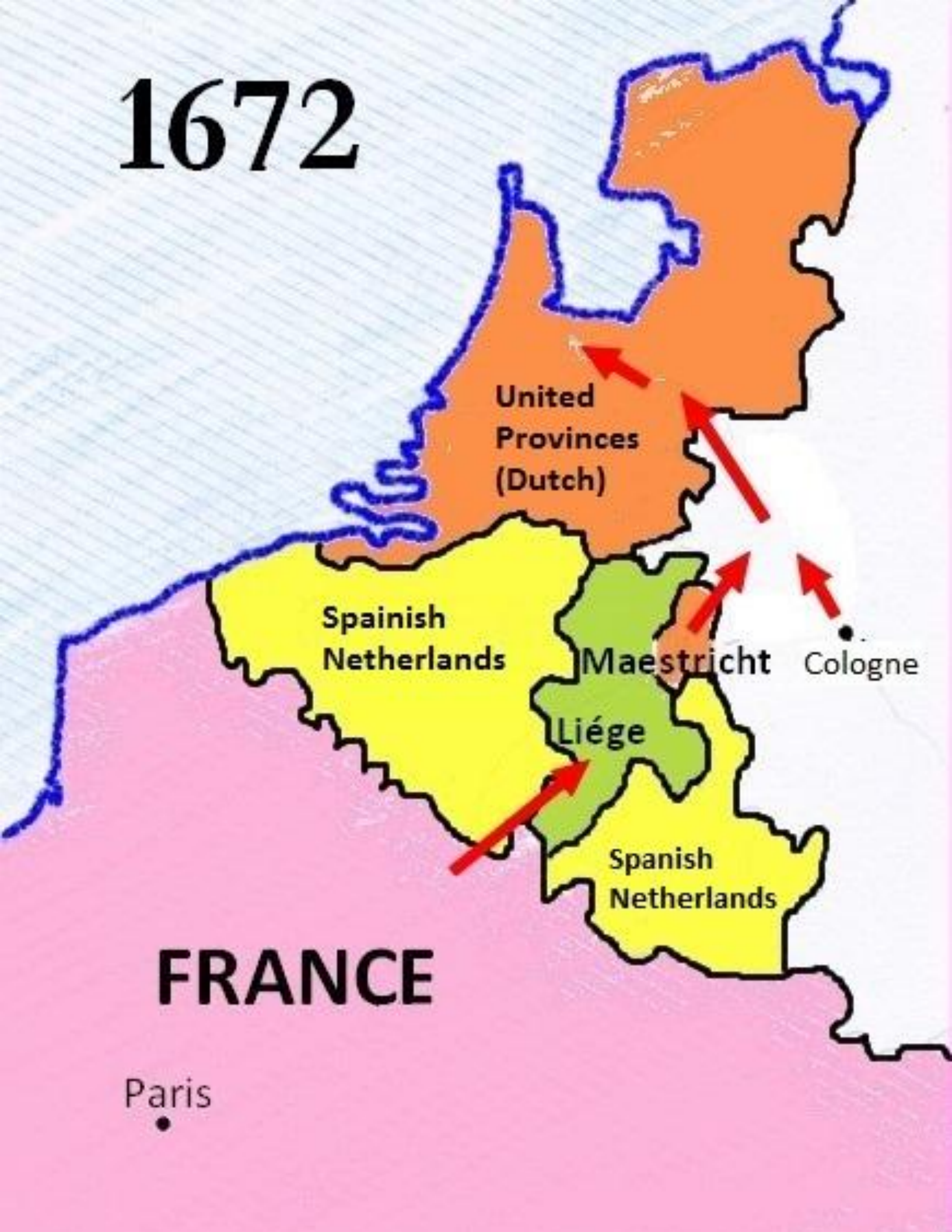
- Territory and fortresses still controlled by the Dutch Republic by end of 1672
- Dutch territory and fortresses controlled by France and allies
- France and allies (Electorate of Cologne with dependancy Bishopric of Liège, Bishopric of Münster)
- French advances
- English areas of interest (control over Rhine-Maas-Scheldt delta)
- French area of interest (Generality Lands)
- Spanish Netherlands
- Holy Roman Empire and defected fortress (Denveter)

Now facing a war of attrition on several fronts, Louis XIV of France instead focused on strengthening French borders with the Spanish Netherlands and Rhineland, while a coalition led by William of Orange sought to minimise any losses. By 1677, France had occupied Franche-Comté and made gains in the Spanish Netherlands and Alsace, but neither side was able to achieve a decisive victory.

Despite failing to conquer the Dutch Republic, the September 1678 Peace of Nijmegen is often seen as the high point of French power in this period. Spain recovered Charleroi from France, but in return ceded Franche-Comté, as well as much of Artois and Hainaut. Under William of Orange, the Dutch regained all the territory lost at the beginning, making him dominant in domestic politics. This position helped him create the anti-French Grand Alliance that fought in the 1688 to 1697 Nine Years' War, and subsequent 1701 to 1714 War of the Spanish Succession.
As part of a general policy of opposition to Habsburg power in Europe, France backed the Dutch Republic during the 1568 to 1648 Eighty Years War against Spain. The 1648 Peace of Münster confirmed Dutch independence and permanently closed the Scheldt estuary, benefiting Amsterdam by eliminating its rival, Antwerp. Preserving this monopoly was a Dutch priority, but this increasingly clashed with French aims in the Spanish Netherlands, which included reopening Antwerp.
William II of Orange's death in 1650 led to the First Stadtholderless Period, with political control vested in the urban patricians or Regenten. This maximised the influence of the States of Holland and Amsterdam, the power base of Johan de Witt, Grand Pensionary from 1653 to 1672. He viewed his relationship with Louis XIV of France as crucial for preserving Dutch economic power, but also to protect him from his domestic Orangist opponents.


1672
United Provinces (Dutch)
Spainish Netherlands
Maestricht
Cologne
Liége
Spanish Netherlands
FRANCE
Paris

Although France and the Republic concluded an assistance treaty in 1662, the States of Holland refused to support a division of the Spanish Netherlands, convincing Louis his objectives could only be achieved by force. The Dutch received limited French support during the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667) but increasingly preferred a weak Spain as a neighbour to a strong France. Shortly after talks to end the Anglo-Dutch War began in May 1667, Louis launched the War of Devolution, rapidly occupying most of the Spanish Netherlands and Franche-Comté.

In July, the Treaty of Breda ended the Anglo-Dutch War, leading to talks between the Dutch and Charles II of England on a common diplomatic front against France. This was supported by Spain and Emperor Leopold, who was also concerned by French expansion. After his first suggestion of an Anglo-French alliance was rejected by Louis, Charles entered the 1668 Triple Alliance, between England, the Republic and Sweden. After the Alliance mediated between France and Spain, Louis relinquished many of his gains in the 1668 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. While Breda and Aix-la-Chapelle were seen as Dutch diplomatic triumphs, they also presented significant dangers; De Witt himself was well aware of these, but failed to convince his colleagues. Louis considered the January 1668 Partition Treaty with Leopold confirmation of his right to the Spanish Netherlands, a point reinforced by Aix-la-Chapelle, despite his concessions. He no longer saw the need to negotiate, and decided their acquisition was best achieved by first defeating the Republic. The Dutch also over-estimated their own power; defeat at Lowestoft in 1665 exposed the shortcomings of their navy and the federal command system, while the successful Raid on the Medway was largely due to English financial weakness.

Date 6 April 1672 – 17 September 1678
Location
Western Europe, Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, and East Indies
Result Treaties of Nijmegen
Territorial changes
France gains Franche-Comté, Ypres, Maubeuge, Câteau-Cambrésis, Valenciennes, Saint-Omer, Cassel, Lorraine, Freiburg, and Kehl
Spain regains Charleroi
Holy Roman Empire regains Philippsburg

FRANÇOIS HENRY DE MONTMORENCY DVC DE
LVXEMBOVRG PAIR ET MARECHAL DE FRANCE,
EPOVX DE CHARLOTE DE CLERMONT, DVCHESSE DE
LVXEMBOVRG · LAN · 1693

CHARLES.IV. DUC de lorraine.

Carolus v Dei Gratia
Lotharingiæ Barri etc Dux

Commanders and leaders
Kingdom of France Louis XIV
Kingdom of France Louvois
Kingdom of France Turenne †
Kingdom of France Condé
Kingdom of France Luxembourg
Kingdom of France Créquy
Kingdom of France Schomberg
Kingdom of France Estrées
Kingdom of France Duquesne
Kingdom of England Charles II of England
Kingdom of England York
Kingdom of England Rupert
Sweden Charles XI
Sweden Carl Gustaf Wrangel
Maximilian Henry
Bernhard von Galen
William III of Orange
De Witt X
Dutch Republic De Ruyter †
Dutch Republic Nassau-Siegen
Dutch Republic Rabenhaupt
Dutch Republic Aylva
Dutch Republic Tromp
Leopold I
Montecuccoli
Frederick William
Lorraine Charles IV
Lorraine Charles V
Charles II of Spain
Mariana of Austria
Villahermosa
San Germán
Denmark–Norway Christian V
Denmark–Norway Niels Juel

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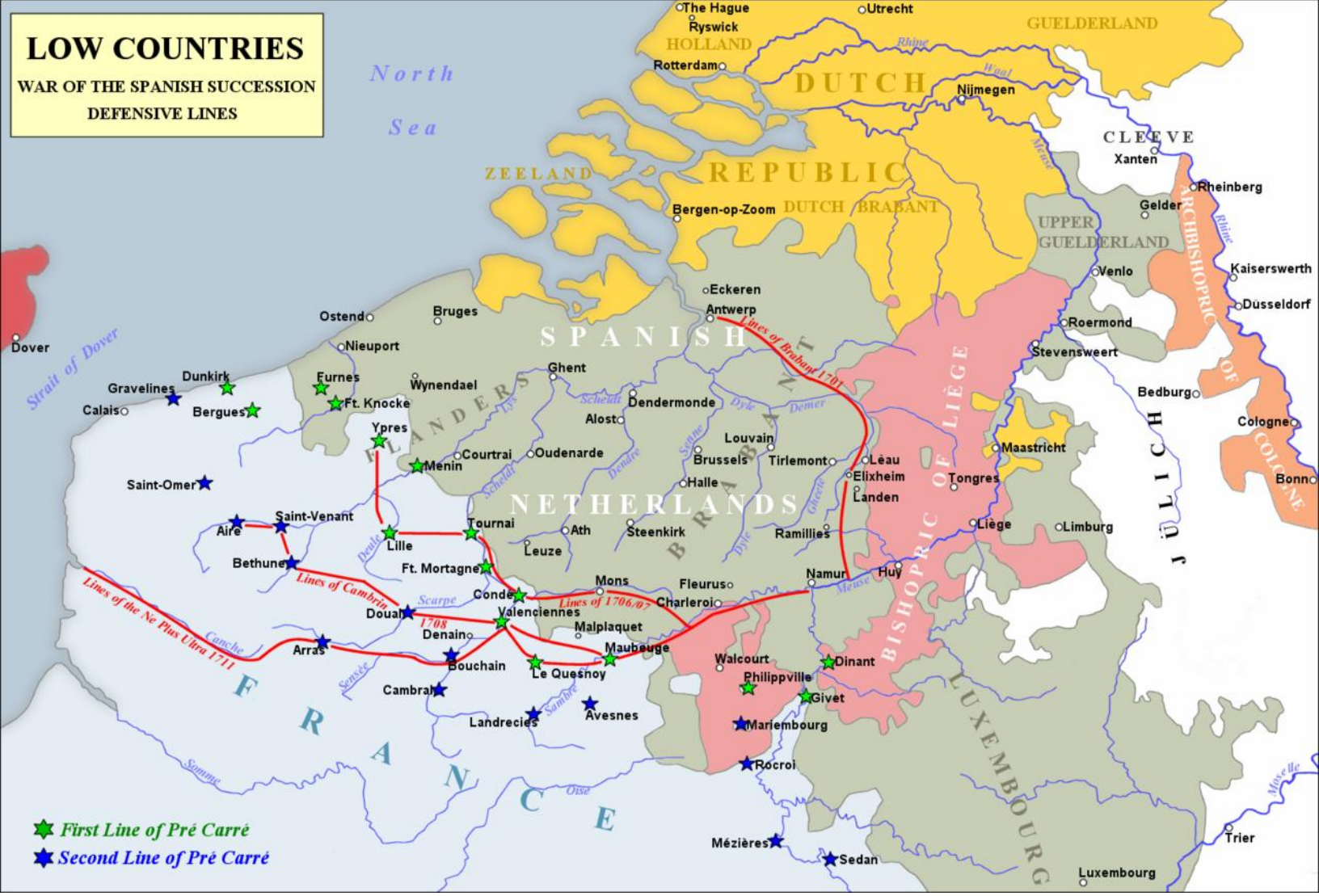
The murder of the De Witts

The Dutch victory over an Anglo-French fleet at the Battle of Texel in August 1673 ensured their survival.

The Battle of Seneffe, 1674; a bloody but inconclusive battle

The Battle of Seneffe took place on 11 August 1674 during the Franco-Dutch War, near Seneffe in Belgium, then part of the Spanish Netherlands. A French army commanded by Condé and a combined Dutch, Imperial, and Spanish force under William of Orange. One of the bloodiest battles of the war, over 20% of those engaged on both sides became casualties, and the result is disputed.

By 1674, Allied forces in the Spanish Netherlands were numerically superior to the French army under Condé, which was based along the Piéton river near Charleroi.



Vauban's proposal for creating a Pré carré or 'duelling zone' on France's northern border, defended by a line of fortresses known as the Ceinture de fer (marked in red and green)

The Viceroy of Naples pays tribute to de Ruyter's fleet in Naples after the Battle of Stromboli by Jan van Essen

The departure of William of Orange and Princess Mary for Holland, November 1677.

Battle of Seneffe